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SERMON

Preach'd before the Honourable
House of COMMONS

A T

St. Margarets Westminster, Jan. 30, 1703.

BEING THE

Anniversary F A S T

OF THE

M A R T Y R D O M

O F

King CHARLES I.

GEN. xlix. v. 6.

*O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret; unto
their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou unite.*

By George Smalridge, D. D. Minister of the New
Church Westminster.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by Henry Hills in Black-fryars,
near the Water-tide. For the Benefit of the Poor.

O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret; unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.

THE Context runs thus.

Simeon and Levi are Brethren; Instruments of cruelty are in their Habitations. O my Soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united: For in their Anger they slew a Man, and in their Self-will they digged down a Wall. Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce, and their Wrath for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

These words express in a very moving and lively manner the good Patriarch *Jacob's* just abhorrence and detestation of a Cruel and Barbarous Fact, with the most deliberate Malice contriv'd, with the basest Treachery carried on, and with the utmost Inhumanity executed by his two Sons *Simeon* and *Levi*; Men every way Brethren; as nearly allied in temper, as in Birth; in their Dispositions and Characters very much resembling, but still far out done by those Regicides, who, as upon this Day made themselves drunk with the blood of the Lord's Anointed. In the 34th Chapter of this Book of *Genesis*, We have a particular Account of that Crime, which *Jacob* had in his view, when he utter'd these words; and it is impossible to consider it, with all its aggravating Circumstances, without passing this Judgment upon the Persons concern'd in it; that they were Revengeful, Cruel, Implacable, Treacherous; Men, who had no regard to the Honour of their Country, and who prostituted Religion, to the carrying on their wicked Purposes with the greater facility and success. An injury, it seems, had been done them by *Sechem* the Son of *Hamor*; and upon the first notice of it, without any demand of satisfaction from him,



Him, without any appeal to Authority for a legal redress, they enter into an hasty resolution of avenging themselves. Having thus made themselves Judges in their own cause, they pay no regard to the stat'd Rules and Measures of Justice; nor observe any proportion between the Injury they have suffer'd, and the Punishment they award. Nothing less than the blood of the Offender can atone for his Offence; nay, Root and Branch, is their avow'd Principle, and for the sin of Shechem an utter extirpation is decreed against the whole Race of the *Shechemites*. Overtures of an Accomodation, when offer'd, seem'd to be accepted by them; but under the disguise of a Treaty, they Prosecute their revengeful purposes; and whilst they speak of Peace, they make themselves ready for War. An Action thus foul and dishonourable was sure to be universally detested; and would in the Language of their Father, *make them stink amongst the Inhabitants of the Land*: But being, past all Sense of Shame, having shaken off all concern for the glory of their Nation, they obstinately proceed in the perpetration of a Crime, which must unavoidably expose both them, and their Posterity to the reproach and hatred of all Countries, and of all Ages. But to render their Villany compleat, and to give it it's finishing stroke, a form of Godliness must be put on; They were the People of God, and could have no commerce with any who refus'd to enter into their Covenant: We cannot, say they, *do this thing to give our Sister to one that is uncircumcis'd*: that had been a reproach to them, and a wound to their tender Consciences: but this Hypocritical pretence of Zeal for the true Religion serv'd only for the better compassing their irreligious ends; and those who were so scrupulous of having any Affinity with such as were Aliens to God's Covenant, made no other use of initiating them into the sacred Rites of it, than to Murder them with the greater Security and dispatch. By this Representation of the fact to which *Jacob* here

alludes, it appears that the Contrivers of it were False, Violent, Ungodly, and Inhumane above the common measures of deprav'd Nature; and yet it may be affirm'd that their Crime, however extraordinary, both as to its kind, and its Degree, bears no proportion to the much greater Sin of those unnatural, unparrall'd and execrable Sons of *Belial* to whose brutal Rage our Martyr'd Sovereign was this day made a Sacrifice. Were it proper to appear an Advocate in so bad a Cause as that of *Simeon* and *Levi*, it would not be very difficult to find out some plausible Colours for the extenuation of their Crime; it might be pleaded, that they were under no ties of Subjection to those against whom they lifted up their hands; that the injury done them was very heinous and provoking; that the treatment, they had met with, was foul and inhospitable; that the great Dishonour brought upon their Family was such as might seem to justify a more than ordinary resentment; that their Blood was by such a just Provocation put into an high ferment, and that it was not yet cool'd, when in their Anger they slew the *Shechemites*. But can those who are unwilling to condemn, who are willing to excuse, who are daring enough to applaud the fact of this day, offer any one Shadow of an Argument to mitigate its guilt, or to lessen our detestation of it? Were the Regicides provok'd to it by any unsufferable Injuries? Or, were they not by many repeated Acts of Royal Favour and Clemency oblig'd? Had there been any ground for their Complaints, yet how was Vengeance theirs? or when had they Authority to repay it? Were they not under the strongest ties of Nature, and of Religion, to defend their Sovereign's Life even with the hazard of their own? Were they not bound to support his Person, Crown and Dignity by reiterated Oaths, Vows, Engagements, Covenants and Protestations? and must not those, who broke thro' all these restraints have been possess'd with a Spirit like to that of the Demon

ack in the Gospel, *whom no one could bind, no not with Chains, because that he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, and the Chains had been pluckt asunder by him, and the Fetters broken in pieces; neither could any one tame him?* It would be some abatement of their Sin, if we could say of them, what *Jacob* here charges upon his Sons, that *in their Anger they slew a Man*; but the Murder of this day was not the effect of a sudden and vehement Passion, but the result of long thought, sedate judgment, and mature Consultation. How often must Nature have started back from the thoughts of a Crime so inhumane, and shocking? How often must a sense of Duty, Awe and Reverence. have been awakn'd within their Breasts! And how much misplaced pains must they have taken, to lay such motions asleep! How often must they have heard the voice of forewarning, and felt the Terrors of an upbraiding Conscience? With what force, with what Authority, must this Substitute of God in the Souls of Men have pleaded the Royal Cause! and with what Difficulty were such powerful Pleas over-rul'd! Did the word of God furnish these Men with plenty of Curses, which they thundered out upon occasion against their Adversaries? and could they in the mean time be forgetful of all those Threats of the Almighty, which are so frequently, and so expressly denounc'd against those, *whom God has given over to a rebate mind, being fill'd with all Unrighteousness, Wickedness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity; Disobedient, Covenant-Breakers, without natural Affection, Implacable Unmerciful?* Were not these terrors of the Lord well known to them? and must they not have frequently set themselves in array before them? and after so much time to consider so many Warnings to retreat, must not their Eyes necessarily be open'd to see the *Angel of the Lord standing as it were in the way with the Sword in his hand to oppose them, because their way was perverse before him!*

Thus complicated was the guilt of these Sons of Violence; in whose crimes we might seem in some measure to partake, could we Hear, could we Speak, could we Think of 'em without an hearty Abhorrence, and just Indignation. Amongst the many good ends for which this solemn Memorial was by publick Authority at first appointed, is still continued, and will we hope for the terror of evil works be long preserv'd, this undoubtedly was One, that as the Virtues and Graces of the *Martyr* were to be mention'd to his immortal Honour, so the enormous Sin of his Murderers might be remembred to their Everlasting Disgrace. For tho' we may be told by some Men of pretenden moderation and temper, that it is now high time to lay aside the remembrance of Crimes so long ago committed; that the *Regicides* have long since answer'd for this fact at the Bar of publick Justice, or at the Tribunal of God; and that it is not decent to implead them fresh, who have already undergone their tryal; Yet certain it is, that such an Act of Oblivion, as is claim'd in their behalf, is neither due to 'em by the Laws of the Land, nor by the Gospel of Christ. For, if to perpetuate the memory of infamous Persons and Actions were any ways unsuitable to a true Gospel-temper, if it were any breach of Christian Charity to brand *Traitors* and *Unrighteous Judges* with an inde iable mark of Ignominy, the names of *Judas Iscariot* and *Pontius Pilate* had not stood recorded in those Books, of which not *one jot or tittle shall perish, till Heaven and Earth pass away*. A generous Zeal against Savage and Barbarous Persons, some Warmth of expression upon the mention of Uncommon and Unnatural Crimes, seems not only warrant-ed, but even recommended to us by the Example of *Jacob*; He was just now expiring; and we cannot suspect that in his last moments He was transported by any immoderate, or unseemly Passion: He here gives us the Character of two of his Sons; and the fondness

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of a Father for his Children should incline him rather to lessen, than to aggravate their Faults: He was now bequeathing his dying Blessing to his Children, and therefore must be dispos'd to speak the Language of Tenderness, and Affection. In these Circumstances, with these Dispositions, instead of Blessing he breaks forth into a Curse; That indignation against the cruelty of his Sons, which had been long since kindled within him, and which was not yet by the length of time extinguish'd, extorts from him this bitter Imprecation; *Curst be their Anger for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, scatter them in Israel.*

Now if We would keep out of the reach of such Curses, as are here denoun'd against *Simeon* and *Levi*, we must take care to avoid the like Guilt; Nor must We be content barely to avoid it, but We must be careful that We make no approaches towards it; We must not enter into any close Familiarities with Men of their Character; We must stand off from 'em, for fear of being infected by 'em; We must often speak to our selves these instructive words of the Patriarch; *O my Soul enter thou not into their secret; with their Assemblies, mine Honour, be not thou united.*

The crying Sin of this Day had in all likelihood never been committed, had the Caution here given been duly observ'd; had Persons of the same Principles and Characters with *Simeon* and *Levi* found no Countenance nor Encouragement from Men, whom we may suppose to have had different Intentions, and more justifiable designs; had none engag'd in any common Measures with them, but those to whom the whole Mystery of their Iniquity was at first lain open. But Charity inclines us to hope, and for the Honour of our Nation We should be dispos'd to believe, that with those Rebellious Subjects, who imbrued themselves in the Blood of their Sovereign, Some at the first sat out who were not from the beginning resolv'd to go the

same lengths; Who, for want of seeing far enough into the consequences of their Actions, were not sufficiently aware, Whither they were going, and with Whom they were engag'd. The best use therefore we can make of our Reflections upon the mischievous effects of such a Conduct is to possess our selves strongly with a firm persuasion of the Truth and Importance of that Prudential Maxim, which is couch'd under the words of my Text, that, *Good and well meaning Men ought to be very cautious how they join in publick designs with Men of Ill Principles and Scandalous Characters.*

Good Men are not by the rules of Morality, or by the precepts of the Gospel forbid *all manner* of correspondence with *all sorts* of Wicked Persons. Where there are probable hopes of making bad Men better, there Charity obliges the Good to converse with 'em in order to their Reformation. Or where Good Men are in no danger of being corrupted by the Wicked, there they are at liberty to converse with 'em without any impeachment of their Wisdom or Goodness. Nor have the Worst of Men such a wide power of doing mischief to a Good Cause, as that their appearing in it should make it unlawful or inexpedient for Good Men to promote it: what One pursues out of an ill motive, the Other may prosecute with better purpose; what One uses unlawful means to compass, the Other may endeavour to attain by such as are warrantable. But the Agreement of Good and Bad Men is then mischievous, and portends ill to the publick, when they act by joint Counsels, and concerted Measures; when there is a thorough Understanding, and mutual Confidence between 'em; when by a close and intimate Alliance they are form'd into one Band; when the Opposition, there is between them, Good and Bad Men, appears much less remarkable than their Concord, as united in One and the Same Cause; when they enter as it were into a League Offensive and Defensive, so that all who are willing to come into this

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Confederacy, whatever their Characters be in other regards, shall be lookt upon and embrac'd as Friends; and all who stand out, without any other Demerit, shall be consider'd and treated as Enemies. Now Good and well-meaning Men ought to be very cautious, how they enter into such an Union of Interests as this with Men of Ill Principles and Scandalous Characters, for these two Reasons.

1. Because, by such an Union they will bring a Scandal upon themselves, and upon Religion, thro' they should not concur in the worst designs of those Wicked Men with whom they unite.
2. Because, by such an Union they are in great danger of being carried on to concur with such Wicked Men in their very worst designs.

And first, *By such an Union they will bring a Scandal upon themselves, and upon Religion, tho' they should not concur in the worst designs of those Wicked Men, with whom they united.*

Some Good Men seem to have entertain'd very wrong Notions concerning the value and advantages of a fair Reputation. If they can approve themselves to God and to their own Consciences, they are not at all solicitous how they stand in the Opinion of the World. But certain it is, that this indifference of theirs to their being Well or Ill spoken of is so far from being commendable, that it is not unwarrantable and dangerous; attended with many ill consequences, and highly prejudicial to the interest of Virtue, and Religion. The Gospel of Christ is indeed much more careful to provide for the purity of our Hearts, and the sincerity of our inward intentions, than for the bare surface and external appearance of our Actions. But tho' we are by the Gospel oblig'd to make the Glory of God, and the approving our selves in His sight our first and chief aim, yet a due care of our own Esteem and Reputation, as far as they may be subservient to God's Glory, is also by the same Gospel required

quired at our hands, as a strict and indispensable duty. However therefore some Men may think it an instance of Humility and Self-denial, to be wholly unconcern'd about a Good or Bad Character, yet We may depend upon the truth of that observation which a judicious Moralift has long since made, that, *to disregard what others think of Us, is the property not only of an Arrogant, but Dissolute Person.*

Now there is nothing that can give a more fatal wound to the Reputation of Men otherwise Good, than too close an intimacy with Person of Infamous and Profligate Characters. It is so natural for all Kinds of Men to consort with those of their own Dispositions and Principles, that it is generally lookt upon both as a Compendious and Sure way of forming a right Judgment concerning any Persons whom we *would* know, from their familiarity with those whom we *do know*; where therefore the Union between Good and Bad Men is open and visible, whilst the Bond, which unites them, is secret and invisible, most are apt hastily to conclude, that there is no great difference between 'em; but that the Former inwardly are as wicked, as the Others outwardly appear to be. Good Men may flatter themselves that they are not responsible for these false judgments that are past upon them; that, if Men will thro' Ignorance misconstrue their Actions, or thro' Perverseness misrepresent them there is no reason they shoul'd be blam'd for other Mens Mistakes or Predjudices. This is indeed a Plea, which, where it is truly made, ought to be readily admitted; but which those Men must nor hope to reap the Benefit of, who by too familiar a Converse with Persons of loose Principles and ill Manners take no care to prevent Mistakes that are so obvious, and to remove such reasonable Prejudices. Our Conduct, as well as our Language, is capable of a double construction; what Truth is in Words, that Goodness is in Actions; and as a down right Honest Man will

take

take all possible care that his Words be true, not only in his own sense who speaks them, but in their Sense also who hear them, so a perfectly good Man will be equally concern'd, that his Behaviour be right, not only in his own Opinion, but also in the esteem of all who shall observe it. Whosoever therefore *enters into the secrets, and unites himself to the Assemblies and Interests of Wicked Men*, when he is aware of the Scandal of such an Alliance, is justly accountable to God and Man for all the mischief of that Scandal, which is not only taken but given. What Opinion must all Lookers on entertain, when they see the Professors of Religion unequally yok'd together with its declar'd Enemies! How unnatural, how monstrous must the Alliance be, when the clean are pair'd with the unclean! *For, what Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness! or what Communion hath Light with Darkness, or what Concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel?* Can it be thought that Religious ends will be promoted, and Righteous purposes carried on by the Servants of Unrighteousness? Will it not be a disparagement to a good Cause, that the Champions of it should be thought to want the Concurrence of Wicked and Hellish Instruments? Let therefore the endeavours of good and well designed Men to promote the honour of Religion be never so sincere; let their Lives and Conversations be in other respects never so Exemplary; let them use all other means possible to allure Mankind to the love and practice of Virtue, yet the encouragement and support they give to Vice by such an Union with Vicious Persons as has been described, will in the Issue be found to do more disservice to Virtue, and to bring a greater dishonour upon Religion, than the most scandalous Actions of the most notorious Sinners.

Some perhaps may think that several of those who in the late times of confusion joyn'd in an Interest contrary to that of the Royalist, were Persons who meant well, and who truly intended the publick good; no Enemies of our Constitution, but sincere lovers of their Country, and affectionately zealous for the Liberties of the People, and for the Purity of Religion. God alone knows their hearts, and it becomes not us to be too forward in judging of their Intentions: But were their designs never so innocent, yet we have reason to lament, that their unhappy Conjunction with these Men, whom no excess of Charity will permit us to think well of, has brought a lasting disgrace upon their Memory, and a great dishonour upon our Holy Religion. How hard has Posterity found it to distinguish between those who are said to have intended the Support, and those who are known to have procur'd the Overthrow of our English Constitution? How difficult is it at this distance to discern, who they were that design'd to reform publick Abuses, and who resolv'd to overturn the establishment of Church and State? Common Fame has made little difference between those who resisted, and those who Murdered the King; and whilst they who pretended only to oppose the encroachments of Arbitrary Power, have been listed under the same colours with the enemies of regal government, it has not been easie for the generality of observers to find the difference between the precious and the vile, and to discriminate the patriot from the

the Rebel. Nor has this suspicious Conduct cast a greater blemish upon the Characters of Men professing Religion than upon the honour of Religion it self; whilst pretenders to extraordinary Purity have acted in Conjunction with notorious Rebels, Religion has been misunderstood as if it were too much a Friend, or at least not enough an Enemy to Faction and Rebellion; and because Seditious and Traiterous practices have been carried on under the form of Godliness, some running into a contrary extreme have thought they could not sufficiently shew their dislike to Sedition without laying aside all appearance of Piety; and for fear of being rankt with Hypocrites, have chose rather to be numbred with the Prophane. By these means a great Reproach has been brought upon Religion in general, and greater still upon the Reform'd; *That it is lawful to depose and Murder Princes*, was a Doctrine heretofore thought peculiar to the Church of Rome, to protest against that Doctrine, amongst other abominations of that Church, was the design and glory of the Reformation: How great a Scandal therefore must those Men have brought upon the Protestant Religion, who at the same time that they profess'd a more than ordinary Zeal against Popery, gave too much countenance to some of the worst Principles, of the worst Men, of the worst Church in the World, in its worst and most corrupted State? From this great Scandal our holy Religion had been free, had all those Men, who we would hope were truly in its Interest, taken sufficient care to keep a due distance from the Councils and Measures of such as had no Religion; had they not by uniting with their Assemblies, and engaging too far with them, given us a plain proof, how necessary it is that *good and well-meaning Men should be nicely cautious how they joyn in publick designs with Men of ill Principles and Scandalous Characters*; least by such an Union they bring a Scandal upon themselves and upon Religion tho' they do not concur in the worst designs of those Wicked Men with whom they are united.

A second reason for this caution is, because by *such an Union they are in great danger of being carried on to concur with such Wicked Men in their very worst designs*.

When Good Men are embark't with Bad, they lie under this great disadvantage that the intentions of the one are open and manifest, while the designs of the other lie hid, and under ground. Little Skill is required to know what the former aim at; but there is need of more penetration, than falls to the share of every good Man, to dive into the intricate Councils of the latter. Were wicked Men so ill advis'd as to display the whole Scheme of their flagitious purposes at one view, none but such as were equally wicked with themselves would come into it: in order therefore to draw in Men of better intentions, such pernicious ends must be industriously kept out of their sight, and they must be let into the main Secret, by leisurely steps and insensible Degrees. Now whilst good Men are unhappily prevail'd upon to go hand in hand with the wicked, and are not sufficiently aware whither their Companions are bent, it is no wonder that being thus blinded, they are too easily led out of the way. And they

they are the more liable to be thus practis'd upon by such as lie in wait to deceive, because their own plainness and integrity makes them unapt to suspect others of Artifice and Doubling; for an honest Simplicity of acting by the Rules of Uprightness, and an happy Dexterity in finding out the wiles of the Crafty and Dishonest, do not always go together, Good Men when engag'd with Bad, are in our Saviour's Language, like *Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; but few of them are able upon this occasion to follow our Saviour's advice of *being wise as Serpents, and harmles as Doves*. And as for want of this necessary Wisdom they are too often over-reacht by those who are well vers'd in all the Arts of Delusion, so are they frequently betray'd into the same fatal mistakes by a misplac'd Charity; which doth indeed of it self dispose them to *think no evil, to believe all things, to hope all things*, but is never observ'd to operate so strongly, even on good Men, as when they are to pass a Judgment upon the Actions of those, with whom they are engag'd in one common Cause. For the Appellations of *Honest, Worth, Well-principled*, do in the language of those who most use them, generally signifies no more than that the Persons thus stil'd and distinguish'd do in the Political opinions they maintain, and the Civil Interests they espouse, intirely agree with those who thus denominate them; So evident is it that a much less degree of Charity is necessary to make Men believe and hope well of their own party, than is requisite to make them equally dispos'd to judge favourably of others. An hearty Affection therefore to a Cause will go a great way towards misleading even the best Men in their Opinions concerning those who joyn with them in the service of it: for so far as any are well withers to this Cause, they are adjudged of course to be truly Good Men; and if after this, there be any thing doubtful in their Carriage, it will be Construed in the best Sense for the sake of that one Quality, which is lookt upon to be without doubt worthy of Praise. Wicked Men will take all possible care to hide their fauits from the Personal knowledge of those good Men, by whom if they were better known they would be less trusted; the Notice whereof of these faults must come to them from the testimony of others; which must be very strong and convincing to persuade Men of what they have no mind to be perswaded. Now whilst Good and well-meaning Men are under such strong prepossessions to think well of their own Parry; whilst all care possibly is taken to keep them in the Dark, and whilst they are willing enough to shut their Eyes against the Light, if ever it should break in upon them, can it reasonably be expected that those who are resolv'd to judge so favourably of the Persons with whom they are linkt, should be over suspicious of their Designs? it is not much rather to be fear'd, that for want of a just suspicion they should be unwillingly subservient to them? Now when good Men for lack of sufficient fore-sight have unawares made those steps, which when they give themselves leave to reflect upon, they cannot but think were false ones, tho' they may perhaps have now and then a faint Inclination to go back, they will find it very difficult to come to a steady resolution of retreating: For in such a case to recede is to confess that they were in the wrong; which is a great

ter degree of mortification than even the best Men can readily submit to. Those wicked Persons who have by false and Specious pretences prevail upon them to go so far, will fright them from all thoughts of a retreat by the odious Names of Apostate and Defserter; and thus having by Craft persuaded them to go one mile, they will by force compel them to go twain. And they are now under the stronger inducements to proceed because by this Confederacy with Evil Men they have justly forfeited their Reputation with the Good; so that should they be dispos'd to leave their present Friends, they would have no great reason to hope for a hearty reception from those, whom they have been at so much pains to make their Enemies. Having therefore no encouragement to expect good quarters from the opposite side, they are necessarily determin'd to stay where they are; nor are they here any longer welcome, than they are useful; and must therefore hope for Protection, upon no other terms than an unshaken fidelity to the Cause. When they were at first entred into it, they might be allow'd to judge for themselves; but being now engag'd beyond retreat, they must be intirely under the direction of their Leaders. *Whilst they were young they girded themselves, and walkt whither they would; but now they are old, they stretch forth their hands, and another girds them, and carries them whither they would not.* Thus are Good Men whilst they act in conjunction with Men of an opposite Character, carried on step by step to those Extremes, which at their first setting out they could not have thought it possible for them ever to have arriv'd at. It was their own power at first whether they would at all unite themselves to the Assemblies of the Wicked; but when they are once got into the Circle, they are so far enchanted, that they cannot find their way out again: They might perhaps be so credulous as to hope that the Wicked, with whom they are join'd, might be made subservient to their good purposes; but their Experience will in the Issue teach them what they might have learnt at a cheaper rate; that *Good Men who have too little Knowledge of the World, are very proper tools for Bad Men of greater reach to work with.* The most profligate Persons may indeed be made the unwilling Instruments of great Good to the World; but it should seem to be the peculiar Prerogative of the Almighty to make this right use of them. God's Holiness is indefectible, and can therefore receive no taint from his making even the Sins of Men cooperate to the bringing about his Righteous purposes. He is a Being of infinite Wisdom, who seeth thro' the most hidden designs of those wicked Persons, whom he employs in his Work; and he is furnished with infinite Power to check them at his pleasure, and so to bend and turn them, as that they may do his Work, whilst they think they are doing their own. But such a management of Evil Men to good purposes as this, is too difficult for the best of Mortals; it is above them, they cannot attain unto it. Neither is their Sanctity so inviolable, as to be proof against infection; nor their knowledge so infallible, as to secure them from being impos'd upon; nor their power so uncontrollable, that they should be in no danger of being over-ruled. Great is the Contagion of Vice, and Good Men cannot be too careful to keep out of the reach of it: *He that toucheth*

uchbach, faith the Wifeman, ſhall be defiled therewith. Great is the frailty
 Vertue, and Good-men cannot be too cautious how they expoſe it to the
 faults of the wicked. For as the ſame Wiſeman obſerves, *How agree the*
ettle and the Earthen pot together? If the one be ſmitten againſt the
her, it ſhall be broken.

That what has been ſaid concerning the great danger of being carry'd
 to the worſt deſigns of wicked Men, by too cloſe a Combination with
 em, is not an empty Speculation, but grounded in the Nature of the
 ing, and verify'd by Experience, is plain from the Progreſs of that Re-
 lligion, which at laſt ended in the conſummate Villainy of this Day. Could
 thoſe who *took council together againſt the Lord's Anointed*, have foreſeen
 om the beginning all the fatal Conſequences, which were ſucceſſively haſt-
 ing on; Could they when they eſpy'd *as it were a little Cloud ariſing*
of the Sea, like a Man's hand, have from that time prognosticated,
 hat *Winds and Storms* were thenceforth gathering; Could they have
 ken in at one view the Confuſions of a long War, the Deſolation of a
 urſhing Kingdom and the Overthrow of a truly Primitive and Apoſto-
 al Church; Could they have been then convinc'd, That the Meaſures
 ey took would neceſſarily end in the total loſs of their Civill Rights;
 at the entire Frame of the Government would be ſhatter'd, and broken
 pieces, and that the Wiſe and Wholſom Conſtitution of *Parliaments*
 ould be effectually deſtroy'd; Could they have fore-known that their
 aggle for Liberty would in the event make them abſolute Slaves; that
 e Weapons which they put into the hands of Mercenary Men, would be
 inted upon themſelves; and that inſtead of a Lawful Prince governing
 th a Paternal Affection, Tyrants ſhould ſet themſelves over them, *who*
ould chaſtiſe them with Scorpions; Could they have preſag'd, what a long
 ain of evils they would enrail upon their Poſterity; evils, which we at this
 y feel, and from which nothing but the Conduct of a Valiant Prince, the
 iſdom a truly *Engliſh Parliament*, and the Providence of a Gracious God
 n reſcue us; Could they, in a word, have had a clear proſpect of all thoſe
 ns and Miſeries which were to uſher in, to accompany, and to follow an In-
 ſtine War; Such a frightful Scene as this would have ſcar'd all, who were
 ot deſperately wicked, from having any ſhare in beginning thoſe troubles,
 which they could ſee no end. But thoſe Maſter-workmen, who laid the
 oundation of all theſe miſchiefs, were too wiſe to let their Under-labourers
 to the knowledge of the whole Scheme: This was a ſecret proper to be
 imparted to them by degrees, and according as they were to bear it. To have
 ld them at firſt, that they were oppreſs'd, and that they could not do them-
 ives and their Country-juſtice without murdering the Tyrant, who op-
 reſs'd 'em, would have been too harſh a Doctrine, and not eaſily digeſted:
 o make it therefore leſs diſtaſtful, and more likely to be receiv'd, it was
 pedient that it ſhould be *given precept after precept, line after line, here*
little, and there a little. Thoſe, who were told and perſwaded that they
 ere oppreſs'd, were eaſily wrought upon to petition for a Redreſs of Gri-
 vances: had they ſtopt there and been decent in their Addreſſes of this kind,
 e Conſtitution might thus far had juſtify'd them: but *Petitions* ſoon pay'd
 the

the way to *Remonstrances*, and *Remonstrances* to *Tumults*: When they insulted their Sovereign in his Palace, they were less scrupulous of taking Arms against Him in the Field; to treat Him as a captive whom they overcome in War, and to seize upon the spoil, was with them only to exercise the right of Conquest: After they had dethroned their Prince, to pass Sentence upon Him, and to condemn and execute Him as a common Malefactor, was a larger step indeed than any of the former, and which few the fore, even of those who had gone on undauntedly thus far, could be prevailed upon to make, but which after such a Progress from one degree of Insolence to another, is not wholly impossible to be accounted for.

Thus have I endeavour'd to represent the fatal Consequences of too strict an Union of Good and Well-meaning Men with Persons of ill Principles and Characters, both from the Reason of the thing, and from the remarkable Instance, which the Sin of this Day affords us; and God grant that neither our *State*, nor our *Church*, may ever in this Age, or in those to come, feel the Mischief of such an unhaply Conjunction. May We be nicely scrupulous how We enter into too near a Fellowship with any sort of Evil-doers; may We be in a more especial manner cautious, how We joyn Our-selves with Persons of such Principles and Practices, as the *Patriarch* of my Text denoted and curs'd in his two degenerate Sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*.

We have here in the presence of GOD humbly and devoutly implor'd His Mercy, *That the guilt of that Sacred and Innocent Blood, which was shed upon this Day shed, may not at any time be visited upon Us, or our Posterity*. Now if We have not offer'd unto GOD the Sacrifice of Fools, if We have not been guilty of the grossest Hypocrisy and Prevarication, We must in our Consciences be thoroughly perswaded of the Piety and Innocency of the Royal Martyr: What We have confess'd with our Mouths, We must believe in our Hearts, That the Murder This Day committed was Sin Abominable in the Sight of GOD, and which ought to be abhorr'd by all good Men. And undoubtedly, whilst there shall be any Distinction kept up amongst Us between Right and Wrong, Order and Confusion, Government and Anarchy; Whilst to do well and suffer patiently for well-doing shall be esteem'd praise-worthy; and to persecute the Righteous, and slay the Innocent shall be a Character of Reproach; Whilst (Gal. 22) Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance, shall be number'd amongst the Fruits of the Spirit; and (Gal. 20.) Hatred, Variance, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, and such like shall stand in that black Catalogue which St. Paul has given Us of Capital and Damnable Sins; so long the Memory of the Righteous Prince shall be blessed, and the Name of his Wicked Destroyer shall rot.

And Blessed, I doubt not, is He who was persecuted for Righteousness Sake, for His is the Kingdom of Heaven: Cursed shall be the Memory of Those who took a Reward to slay an Innocent Person; and all the People shall say, Amen.

F I N I S.

